

## **Examining Imbalances between Housing and Employment Opportunities using the Michigan Spatial Mismatch Tool**

### **Project Description and Purpose**

Spatial mismatches between housing and employment opportunities contribute to longer commutes, higher transportation costs, increased traffic congestion and greater spatial inequality for racial minorities and low-income residents. The Michigan Spatial Mismatch (MSM) Tool (<http://MSMTool.spdc.msu.edu>) is an online data visualization tool, developed with funding from the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) at Michigan State University (MSU), that is designed to facilitate detailed analyses of mismatches between housing and employment.

The MSM Tool allows users to:

- Map imbalances in the number of residents and workers in neighborhoods across the state
- Map racial, income, and educational disparities between residents and workers in specific neighborhoods
- Examine physical, social, and economic conditions that might contribute to mismatches between housing and employment opportunities

Funding from the Urban Collaborators program was used to support a half-day workshop designed to introduce planners and other public officials to the MSM Tool. The workshop, which was held at the Oakland County Planning Division on December 6, 2019, provided training on how the MSM Tool can be used to assist Michigan policymakers and public officials in identifying neighborhoods that are high-priority areas for housing and economic development. The funds were used for marketing (the design of flyers), the development of training materials for use at the workshops, and to provide catering for workshop participants. Funds were also used to cover the cost of making changes to the MSM Tool in response to feedback from workshop.

### **Partners and cities involved**

This project was led by Noah J. Durst of the School of Planning, Design and Construction. MSU partners included Harmony Gmazel, Holly Madill, and Marie Ruemenapp. Local government partners who participated in the workshop included representatives from more than a dozen local governments in southeast Michigan.

### **Results**

The feedback from workshop participants suggests that the workshop helped participants to have a better understanding of the importance of spatial mismatches and helped them to identify mismatches in their community using the MSM Tool.

### **Impact**

The team has received a second round of funding to support workshops in 4-5 additional counties across the state. The eventual goal is to identify long-term MSUE partners who can use the MSM Tool to help local governments address patterns spatial mismatch across the state and to identify and apply for funding to support improvements to and expansion of the MSM Tool.